

SHORT TALK

Thank you for letting me speak today, Father. My name is [insert name] and this *Family Fast Day* I'm here on behalf of CAFOD, the official overseas charity of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Pope Francis says we are a single family living in a common home. I want to talk to you about the climate crisis. This is a crisis that will affect each and every one of us. A crisis that is damaging our world. Our common home. God's creation.

The Coronavirus pandemic is pushing millions of people around the world into poverty and deepened inequality. The poorest and most vulnerable people in the world are also the ones who are being hit hardest by climate change. Harvests are failing. Cities are flooding. Entire communities are finding it harder and harder to survive in the place they call home.

But, in the face of this, all around the world, ordinary people like you and me are giving their all to protect our planet. Our common home. God's creation. I'd like to tell you about one of these guardians of creation.

Ivanilde is a mother, a grandmother and a farmer. And, for the last 19 years, she's been on the frontline of the struggle to protect our common home.

She lives in a small patch of rainforest in one of the most heavily deforested regions of the Brazilian Amazon. Pope Francis has said that the health of our planet depends on the health of the Amazon – yet every year thousands of acres are deliberately burned so the land can be cleared for cattle ranching, or simply to be turned over to make a quick profit.

More than once, Ivanilde's home has been ravaged by fires started on land owned by wealthy cattle ranchers. She's felt the heat on her face and the sting of the smoke in her eyes as the flames destroyed her trees and crops. Trees she's planted herself and spent so long caring for – the trees whose fruits her family rely on to survive.

She's faced obstacles that could shake the spirits of the very bravest – but she has never given up.

With the help of local experts from our church network, she's replanted and restored her land. Thanks to donations like yours, expert human rights lawyers were able to stand alongside Ivanilde and her community through years of legal battles, to help them win their rights to stay, and protect the fragile piece of the Amazon they call home.

Ivanilde is not alone. All over the world, people are doing their bit to fight the worst effects of climate change. In Ethiopia, water experts are helping to build solar-powered pumps to help communities struggling with drought. In Bangladesh, local climate experts are helping people protect their homes and livelihoods from ever more devastating cyclones.

> *Insert optional gospel reflection here - see overleaf.*

By giving today, you'll be helping the people who have done the least to cause the climate crisis but are being hit the hardest by its devastating effects. And you will be supporting people like Ivanilde, who are dedicating their lives to protecting our common home. You can give online or by using a CAFOD envelope.

> *If you have a contactless machine, add: you can give using our contactless machine*

You can also join us in asking the Prime Minister to show leadership in tackling the climate crisis by signing our petition on the CAFOD website.

> *If parish is doing a Go Green meal event add:*

We're also turning our *Family Fast Day* meal green this year – please join us for a simple, planet-friendly meal [*share the time and location of your meal here*].

Thank you for your generosity today. Through Ivanilde's resolute commitment to our common home, we can find hope. And, through your gifts, solidarity and prayer, our hope will be strengthened. May the Holy Spirit guide us, strengthen our resolve and 'renew the face of the earth'.

OPTIONAL GOSPEL REFLECTIONS (for use in *Short talk* - see overleaf)

Weekend of 25-26 September (Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47)

In today's gospel we heard a drastic call to action, if we are to be true followers of Christ. As our bishops reminded us at Pentecost, 'Our world, God's creation, is a precious gift to us. It is our common home entrusted to each generation.' As we listen to the story of Ivanilde, this gospel message perhaps takes on another meaning for our daily lives. Even if it means making difficult choices or facing discomfort, we are called to play our part to protect the earth and to support others throughout the world as they take action as guardians of creation. In this way, by making whatever sacrifice we are able to, and by working together, we strive to bring about true hope for the future of the earth for generations to come.

Weekend of 2-3 Oct (Mark 10:2-16)

As we heard in today's gospel, Jesus welcomed the little children, making time and space for them to be in his presence. He wanted them to feel welcome and heard. Today, there are many people who feel excluded and unheard, yet all of us have dignity and worth, because we are created by God. Pope Francis calls us all to dream and act together: 'Let us dream, then, as a single human family... as children of the same earth which is our common home... each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.' We can all play our part in ensuring a positive future for the earth and all living creatures. Through our prayers, gifts and actions, we can support people like Ivanilde, who play a vital role as guardians of creation.

HARVEST INTERCESSION

We pray for all those striving to protect the earth, our common home: that God may strengthen them in their work and inspire us all to be guardians of the precious gift of creation.

SHORT ANNOUNCEMENT

By donating to CAFOD this *Family Fast Day*, you can help communities affected by the worst impacts of the climate crisis. CAFOD works with local experts to help people around the world to adapt to the changing climate and protect our common home. You can donate on the CAFOD website or by using a CAFOD envelope.

See overleaf for *Short talk* >